

CLAIMS:

1. An apparatus configured to be located on a frame of a patient support, the frame having a top surface configured to support a patient and first and second spaced apart sides which define a width dimension of the top surface, the
5 apparatus comprising:
a mattress positioned over the frame of the patient support, the mattress having an upper surface to support the patient, a lower surface, and first and second spaced apart side portions which define a width dimension of the mattress which is greater than the width dimension of the top surface of the frame, the mattress having a
10 continuous support surface extending along the width dimension of the mattress; and
a support coupled to the patient support to support portions of the lower surface of the mattress adjacent the first and second sides of the mattress which extend beyond the first and second sides of the frame.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the support comprises first
15 and second side extensions coupled to the first and second sides of the frame of the patient support, the first and second side extensions each having an upper surface to support the mattress.
3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the patient support with the support coupled thereto is about 6 to about 10 inches wider than the width dimension
20 of the top surface of the patient support alone.
4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the width dimension of the patient support with the support attached thereto is about 25% to about 50% wider than the width dimension of the top surface of the patient support alone.
5. An apparatus configured to be located on a frame of a patient
25 support, the frame having at least two frame sections pivotably coupled together about at least one pivot axis, each of the frame sections including a top surface configured to support a patient and first and second spaced apart sides which define a width dimension of the top surface, the apparatus comprising:
a width extender including at least two sections which are coupled
30 together, the width extender extending across at least one pivot axis of the frame so that the width extender pivots with the at least two frame sections, the width extender cooperating with the frame to provide a support surface for the patient having an

overall width dimension which is greater than the width dimension of the top surface,
and

a retainer to maintain the width extender in a desired position on the
frame.

5 6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the width extender includes
a side extension coupled to one of the first and second sides of the frame of the patient
support.

7. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the width extender includes
first and second side extensions coupled the first and second sides of the frame of the
10 patient support, respectively.

8. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the width dimension of the
combined patient support and width extender is about 6 to about 10 inches wider than
the width dimension of the top surface of the patient support alone.

9. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the width dimension of the
15 combined patient support and width extender is about 25% to about 50% wider than
the width dimension of the top surface of the patient support alone.

10. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein each section of the width
extender is pivotably coupled to an adjacent section about a pivot axis aligned with a
pivot axis of the frame sections.

20 11. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the sections of the width
extender each include an accessory rail, the accessory rails being pivotably coupled to
an accessory rail of an adjacent width extender section to pivotably couple each width
extender section to the adjacent width extender section.

12. The apparatus of claim 5, further comprising a mattress having
25 a first portion extending over the top surface of the frame and a second portion
extending over the width extender, the mattress providing a continuous support
surface for the patient extending across an entire width dimension of the top surface
of the frame and the width extender.

13. The apparatus of claim 5, further comprising a handle coupled
30 to the width extender.

14. A method of supporting a patient including the steps of;
providing a patient support defining a patient support surface;

comparing the size of the patient to the size of the patient support surface; and

adjusting the size of the patient support surface based on the comparing step.

5 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the adjusting step includes providing a width extender to enlarge the patient support surface.

 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the width extender comprises first and second side extensions coupled to a first side and a second side of the patient support respectively.

10 17. The method of claim 15, wherein the width extender comprises a first side extension coupled to a first side of the patient support to increase the patient support surface width in a first direction only.

 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the width extender comprises a second side extension coupled to a second side of the patient support to increase the patient support surface width in a second direction only.

15 19. The method of claim 17, wherein the width extender comprises a third side extension able to attach to the first side extension to increase the patient support surface width in the first direction.

 20. The method of claim 15, wherein width extender is an overlay and a width dimension of the overlay is about 25% to about 50% wider than a width dimension of the patient support surface of the patient support alone.

20 21. A patient support comprising:
 a frame;
 a patient support surface coupled to the frame and configured to
25 receive a patient thereon, the patient support surface having a length dimension and a width dimension;

 an extender configured to attach to the patient support such that an upper surface of the extender is configured to receive the patient thereon, the upper surface of the extender providing a width dimension about 25% to about 50% greater;
30 and

 a retainer coupled to the overlay, the retainer being configured to maintain the overlay in a desired position relative to the patient support surface.

22. The patient support of claim 21, wherein the frame includes first and second spaced apart sides which define the width dimension of the patient support surface, and further comprising first and second accessory rails coupled to the first and second sides of the frame, respectively.

5 23. The patient support of claim 22, wherein the retainer includes first and second members configured to engage the first and second accessory rails, respectively, to maintain the extender in the desired position.

24. The patient support of claim 21, wherein the width dimension of the extender is about 6 to about 10 inches wider than the width dimension of the top surface of the patient support.

25. An apparatus configured to be located on a frame of a patient support, the frame having a top surface configured to support a patient and first and second spaced apart sides which define a width dimension of the top surface, the apparatus comprising:

15 a mattress positioned over the frame of the patient support, the mattress having an upper surface to support the patient, a lower surface, and first and second spaced apart side portions which define a width dimension of the mattress which is greater than the width dimension of the top surface of the frame, the mattress having a continuous support surface extending along the width dimension of the mattress; and

20 a support coupled to the patient support to support portions of the lower surface of the mattress adjacent the first and second sides of the mattress which extend beyond the first and second sides of the frame.

26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the patient support with the support coupled thereto is about 6 to about 10 inches wider than the width dimension of the top surface of the patient support alone.

27. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the width dimension of the patient support with the support attached thereto is about 25% to about 50% wider than the width dimension of the top surface of the patient support alone.

28. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the support includes an overlay positioned over the frame of the patient support, the overlay having an upper surface to support the mattress and a lower surface configured to abut the top surface

of the patient support, the overlay having a width dimension greater than the width dimension of the top surface.

29. The apparatus of claim 28, further comprising a retainer to maintain the overlay in a desired position on the frame.

5 30. The apparatus of claim 28, further comprising a fastener to couple the mattress to the overlay.

31. The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the support comprises first and second side extensions coupled to the first and second sides of the frame of the patient support, the first and second side extensions each having an upper surface to support the mattress.

10 32. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the mattress includes a plurality of mattress sections, each mattress section having a width dimension which is greater than the width dimension of the top surface of the frame, and each mattress section also having a continuous support surface extending along the width dimension of the mattress section.

15 33. An apparatus configured to be located on a frame of a patient support, the frame having at least two frame sections pivotably coupled together about at least one pivot axis, each of the frame sections including a top surface configured to support a patient and first and second spaced apart sides which define a width dimension of the top surface, the apparatus comprising:

20 a width extender including at least two separate sections which are coupled together, the width extender extending across at least one pivot axis of the frame so that the width extender pivots with the at least two frame sections, the width extender cooperating with the frame to provide a support surface for the patient having an overall width dimension which is greater than the width dimension of the top surface, and

a retainer to maintain the width extender in a desired position on the frame.

30 34. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the width extender includes an overlay positioned over the frame of the patient support, the overlay having an upper surface to support the patient and a lower surface configured to abut the top surface of the patient support, the overlay having a width dimension greater than the width dimension of the top surface.

35. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the width extender includes a side extension coupled to one of the first and second sides of the frame of the patient support.

5 36. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the width extender includes first and second side extensions coupled the first and second sides of the frame of the patient support, respectively.

37. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein adjacent sections of the width extender are coupled together by at least one flexible strap.

10 38. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein each section of the width extender is pivotably coupled to an adjacent section about a pivot axis aligned with a pivot axis of the frame sections.

39. The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the sections of the width extender each include an accessory rail, the accessory rails being pivotably coupled to an accessory rail of an adjacent width extender section to pivotably couple each width
15 extender section to the adjacent width extender section.

40. The apparatus of claim 33, further comprising a mattress having a first portion extending over the top surface of the frame and a second portion extending over the width extender, the mattress providing a continuous support surface for the patient extending across an entire width dimension of the top surface
20 of the frame and the width extender.